

I recently got my hands on an old book called *The Secret Millionaire Next Door*. It was a popular book and study on how and what decisions people made to become millionaires. What the authors exposed was that these "next door millionaires" developed a habit of doing simple little ordinary everyday things with their money.

Now I'm not writing this to give financial advice, but rather to discuss what successful people have a knack at doing: mastering the mundane. It's the boring, simple, and disciplined choices that players and parents can make that, over time, will separate the good from the great. A strong focus on the amount of intentional touches on the ball, coupled with guidance from qualified coaches and support from parents can create our own "millionaires in soccer next door."

So what type of simple little things are we talking about?
Brace yourselves for this...

From a club perspective, a choice our players and parents can make every training session is simply wearing the proper training attire. This may sound easy and not a 'game changer,' but that's precisely why it's important. The routine of lacing up the boots, tucking the shirt in, having matching socks and shorts is a part of creating a winners attitude. The way our players approach training (urgency and mindset) will carry over into how players approach a game.

Admittedly, fostering a professionally structured training environment is a coach's responsibility as well. But our players need to come ready to compete and to look the part. Taking pride in the club (i.e. wearing our colors) and feeling a part of something bigger than just ourselves is part of why we want our kids in team sports.

A "boring" action our parents can master or create a habit of doing is sharing a victory with their kids. As a parent, the first thing we can say after training/game is "tell me something you did well today at practice" or "I really liked that you gave 100% effort today." These things may sound empty or may be met with indifference, but what we are telling our kids is that we believe in them, we are celebrating with them and that we care about them – not the result. A common mistake we all make is asking questions or making statements that relate specific individual short term success to their worth (i.e. Did you score today? Why didn't the coach start you? Did you win?).

These are only two small ideas. But if routinely done over time we are

teaching the players the importance of consciously being prepared and also showing them that no matter what, we are in their corner and we see success in them. There's no magic formula to create well-rounded players who excel on / off the field. But it doesn't have to be over complicated either.

Self-Driven (Hard Work) + Quality Instruction + Good Decisions + Time = Success

Let's get back to being boring.

Originally published at NSCAA.com by club soccer executive director Kevin Burk.